

The Wrath of God and the Bride of Christ

by Jeremy James



"Amos, what seest thou?" (Amos 8:2)

Born-again

There are several indicators in the life of a believer which show that he truly is a believer, someone who has been born again in Christ and is now a new creation. We will not attempt to enumerate each of these here but will focus instead on just one of them – our daily expectation of the Rapture.

We would appear to be heading into a time of real persecution for Christians in the west. The Children of Wickedness are no longer content to drive Christians out of the Middle East and to persecute those who are living in countries like China, India or Pakistan. They are now moving rapidly toward the implementation of their scheme to actively oppress Christians living in the US, Canada, Europe and Australia. Some of this oppression will utilize Islam and its deep-rooted intolerance of Christianity. The Elite know that by bringing more and more Muslims into Europe and America they are laying the ground for a painful confrontation at some future date. But before that date arrives they intend to deal a heavy blow to true Biblical Christianity in the west.

We are already seeing ample evidence of how this is being put into effect through the LGBTQ agenda. Their goal is to separate the small proportion of true believers from the much larger body of nominal Christians and, having done that, to target and victimize their leaders. Once the pastors and shepherds have been taken away, the Elite expect the rest to capitulate or disperse.



The Rapture of the Church

In earlier papers we have shown how the Bible teaches a Pre-Tribulation Rapture (PTR) – see #81, #91 and #107. We have also shown that a PTR does not conflict in any way with the frequent references in God’s Word to the perennial persecution (“tribulation”) of the saints – see #78.

Those who object to a PTR usually do so on the grounds that it allegedly makes believers indifferent to the rising tide of wickedness in the world today. However, by saying this, they are implying that true believers who hold to the “**blessed hope**” do not hate evil. And that is false.

Their position, theologically, is based on a misunderstanding of God’s Word, a failure to distinguish between the turmoil of a world controlled by Satan and the plight of a world subjected to the Wrath of God.

God’s Wrath last fell on the world at the time of the Flood. It had nothing to do with any act or scheme initiated by man or Satan. The Wrath of God in the End Time, which we know as the Seven Year Tribulation, will be similar to the worldwide Flood. It too will constitute, from start to finish, a sovereign judgment of God upon the entire earth.

The Wrath of God at the time of the Flood lasted 150 days – from the start of the deluge to the day the waters began to subside. The Wrath of God in the Tribulation will last a good deal longer – 2520 days.

The Wrath of God in the End Time and the Seven Year Tribulation are the same event. Since Christ endured the wrath of God on Calvary, and did so in our place, it cannot fall thereafter on the church. It would be impossible for it to do so. This is why the church must be taken from the earth before the commencement of the 2520-day period.



The persecution of the church over the course of many centuries has been her principal means of sanctification. This was the suffering which she was obliged to endure as the God-ordained witness of Christ here on earth. It was inflicted entirely by the Enemy and had nothing whatever to do with the Wrath of God! All that she has ever suffered in the flesh for her Beloved will add greatly to her adornment in glory (We will return to this later.).

The Wrath of God

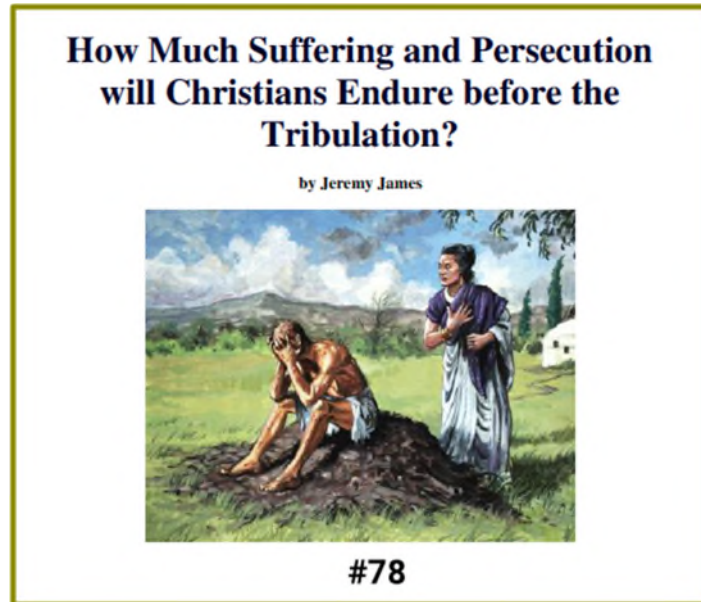
The refusal to see the Wrath of God for what it is has caused much confusion in the modern church. When Christ returns the second time he will come as a lion, not a lamb. His Father will place him in charge of the great Judgment that will afflict the entire earth. For this reason alone his Bride cannot be here during this season of retribution, **“for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?” (Joel 2:11).**

The seven Seal judgments, which mark the commencement of the 7-year Tribulation, are unsealed by Christ himself. It would be perverse to expect our Heavenly Father to require His Son, by doing so, to pour flaming fire on his Bride. It would be even more perverse to expect that He would do so when His Son had already paid her sin debt on Calvary!

It is a mark of how far Biblical exegesis in the modern church has drifted from the literal truth of God’s Word that insane conclusions like these are deemed acceptable.

The church must be taken from the earth before the seven year Tribulation begins. Those who claim otherwise have either failed to grasp what the Word of God is telling us about the Rapture – though there may be good reasons for this (see below) – or they are deliberately trying to confuse and mislead the saints.

We also need to remember that the church WILL suffer tribulation or persecution before the Rapture (See our earlier paper, #78). This is already happening in many parts of the world today and will only get worse, spreading to regions which have not experienced anything of the kind for several centuries.



The Door

Christians will be attacked as intolerant bigots for refusing to accept that God has made generous provision for the salvation of souls through other religions. He is such a loving God, they will argue, that He would never have confined the path of redemption to one route only. He loves all souls equally, no matter what religion they follow, and will draw to Himself all who live an honest and upright life. The grace of Calvary is freely available to all, just as God intended. It is not necessary to convert to Christianity to benefit from what Christ achieved on Calvary for the whole of mankind. Through his death and resurrection he unlocked a door into heaven, a universal door, which everyone can walk through, regardless of their religious affiliation.

To man in his fallen condition this is a very attractive lie and a great many will choose to believe it.

This deadly lie denies the most important truth of all, namely that Christ IS the door.

Our heavenly Father has provided a door into heaven, and that door is His Son. Unless we come before Christ and accept him as **“the way, the truth, and the life”**, we are lost. We do this through faith alone by the grace and convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

There is no other door. All who reject Jesus Christ, the living Door, are condemned to undergo the Great White Throne judgment and to forfeit forever the joy of living in the presence of God.



Christ is not the path to the door, as the wicked would have us believe, but the door itself. All who refuse to accept him as their Lord and Savior, for whatever reason, have turned away from the Door. They have decided to rely on their own works and their own righteousness as their means of salvation.

By doing so they reject the perfect redemption that Christ has provided and continue to live under condemnation.

A true Christian knows that no matter how devout a 'good' Muslim or a 'good' Hindu may be, he is still a lost soul. He is still at war with God. He is still crushed by the weight of his own sins and until he asks the perfect Redeemer to set him free, through the cross of Calvary, he will remain in bondage to Satan.

If that sounds horrifying, it is because the effects of sin are horrifying. Sin came from pride. This is the same vile impediment that keeps the unbeliever from coming to Christ in true humility and repentance.

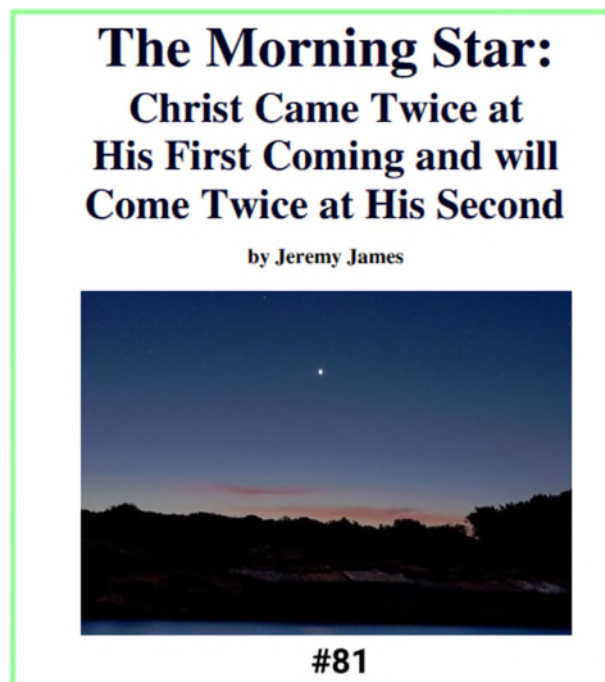
The Pagan Morality of the New World Order

The believing Christian, one who is faithful to the Word of God, will soon be regarded as an intolerant bigot, not only because he claims that salvation is found only in Christ, but because of his refusal to accept or acknowledge the pagan morality of the New World Order. A Christian may love the sinner and hate the sin, but the world will scorn this attitude as both condescending and elitist. He will be expected to disregard the sin entirely and to treat as natural, wholesome and pleasing to God many types of behavior which the Bible utterly condemns.

This is how the Enemy hopes to separate the saints from God. He wants to place them in a situation where their prayers have no effect – because they foolishly affirmed the new morality (**“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:” – Psalm 66:18**). Alternatively, if they stand their ground they will leave themselves open to prosecution under the law.

A believer will even be prosecuted for using the wrong word. The LGBTQ agenda is designed to trap anyone who dares to uphold the Biblical teaching on gender by referring to a man and a woman, respectively, by the appropriate pronouns, “he” and “she.” As the prophet Isaiah foresaw, **“for a word”** he will be made an offender:

**“That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare
for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside
the just for a thing of nought.”
(Isaiah 29:21)**



For born-again Christians this can mean only one thing: The war has come to our own backyard. We will shortly be required to make a decisive choice between the ways of the world and the Word of God. Many nominal believers will do what several denominations, such as the Anglicans and Episcopalians, are already doing – reinterpreting the Bible to accommodate the LGBTQ agenda. Baptists and other denominations are under immense pressure to follow suit, and many of their leaders appear eager to compromise.

We are about to witness a major crisis in the church. Pastors and preachers across Europe and America will shortly be asked to affirm the LGBTQ agenda, perhaps by participating in a ceremony which validates the homosexual lifestyle, or to take a stand which unequivocally rejects that lifestyle – probably by refusing a request to perform such a ceremony. All who take the latter course will incur a legal penalty of some kind, such as a large fine. They will also be hit with a court order to comply with the request or face further financial penalties. Repeated failure to comply could result in the confiscation of property or a jail sentence. A church might even lose its license to operate.

How many believers will support them?

The great falling away

This is eerily similar to the great “falling away” or ***apostasia*** that the Apostle Paul speaks about in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. The falling away is not, as some suppose, a significant movement of professing Christians into unbelief or into another religion, but rather a general slide into a false form of Christianity. Paul chose the word “apostasia” for a reason. An apostate is not someone who has abandoned his religion but someone who accepts and welcomes a critical and malignant change in its theology.

Much of this false Christianity already exists in embryonic form. Anyone who is familiar with the teachings of the Purpose Driven church, the Prosperity Gospel, Word of Faith, or the various incarnations of the New Apostolic Reformation will have discerned the contours of apostate End Time Christianity. New Age mysticism has gained a strong foothold in the evangelical church and most, if not all, of the principal leadership roles and academic/teaching positions are filled by Freemasons and sundry other impostors.

In the book of Revelation, chapter 17, when John saw the Mother of Harlots, he wrote: **“and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.” (Revelation 17:6).** He was greatly shocked by the vision before him. The church of Christ had become, in its debased End Time form, a woman arrayed in purple and scarlet and decked with gold and precious stones. It was not another religion per se but a sickening parody of true Christianity.



The Day of Christ and the Day of the LORD

We can get a glimpse of the darkness that is already working in the church by simply looking at the corrupt translations of the Bible that are now being used in many so-called Bible-believing churches. The NIV is probably the worst, a cleverly twisted piece of work which is apparently used by 80% or more of professing Christians. But the others, too, contain many strategic lies – terms and concepts which have been deliberately mistranslated in order to obscure an important truth and mislead believers.

Let's consider just one example. The KJV refers to "the day of Christ" in the following verse:

**"That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled,
neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us,
as that the day of Christ is at hand."
(2 Thessalonians 2:2)**

What does this term mean? For anyone who cares about the truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture, this is an important question. It does not refer to "**the day of the Lord**" which, as numerous other passages of Scripture confirm, designates the occasion when Christ will return to punish the wicked.

As we have shown in an earlier paper (#107) "**the day of the Lord Jesus**" (1 Corinthians 5:5 and 2 Corinthians 1:14), "**the day of Jesus Christ**" (Philippians 1:6) and "**the day of Christ**" (Philippians 1:10 and 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:2) ALL refer to the same prophetic occasion, the day of the Resurrection of the saints and the Rapture of the Church. They do NOT refer to the day of the LORD/Lord, which is a later, separate event known as the seven year Tribulation.



**"O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove
unto the multitude of the wicked:"**

Psalm 74:19

Why do several translations confuse ‘the day of the Lord’ with ‘the day of the Lord Jesus’? The scholars and academics will probably point to two early manuscripts which exclude the name ‘Jesus’. But in doing so they are rejecting the testimony of several hundred manuscripts which include it.

This is a startling and very serious error. We can see from the translations below that it has found its way into the Bible versions used by the vast majority of Christians today:

1 Corinthians 5:5 - “the day of the Lord Jesus” [KJV]

NIV

“hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh,
so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.”

ESV

“you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh,
so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

CSB

“hand that one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh,
so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

NET

“turn this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh,
so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

HCSB

“turn that one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that
his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord.”

2 Thessalonians 2:2 - “the day of Christ” [KJV]

NIV

“not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly
from us – whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter –
asserting that the day of the Lord has already come.”

ESV

“not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.”

CSB

“not to be easily upset or troubled, either by a prophecy or by a message or by a letter supposedly from us, alleging that the day of the Lord has come.”

NET

“not to be easily shaken from your composure or disturbed by any kind of spirit or message or letter allegedly from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here.”

NASB

“that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.”

RSV

“not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.”

ASV

“to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand;”

HCSB

“not to be easily upset in mind or troubled, either by a spirit or by a message or by a letter as if from us, alleging that the Day of the Lord has come.”

NIV New International Version
ESV English Standard Version
NET New English Translation
ASV American Standard Version

NASB New American Standard Bible
CSB Christian Standard Bible
RSV Revised Standard Version
HCSB Holman Christian Standard Bible

As we can see, the Enemy has been very busy indeed! Christians have long been warned not to trust the modern Bible translations, but most have ignored the warning. As a result we have today a situation where few believers can defend the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. A professing church that confuses the “**blessed hope**” (**Titus 2:13**) with “**the wrath of God**” (**Romans 1:18**) is a church whose true spiritual strength has been greatly depleted. It may feel firm in its profession but, in reality, it is like a wall ready to fall.



The Promises of God

The Christians who are best equipped to deal with the trials and hardship ahead are those who dwell on the Rock. These are the ones who trust completely in the Word of God and delight daily in the “blessed hope,” the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. They get up every morning knowing that today they might hear the great Trumpet call, when the dead in Christ rise first and those who are living are lifted on high in the twinkling of an eye. They are the ones who know that the Holy Spirit dwelling within them will never leave them nor forsake them. And they are the ones who cannot be shaken because they live each day in the glorious certainty of God’s promises.

In our minds and hearts, His promises are akin to memories of actual events. Humanly, we find solace by reflecting on pleasant events from our childhood, for example when we spent a summer holiday with our cousins on the farm. These enjoyable memories lift our spirits. The promises of God are similar. They relate to events that have not yet come to pass, but they are as certain as though they already had. During times of trial and adversity, we can lean on His promises and extract from their sweetness and certainty a soothing balm for our soul.

No doubt the Apostle Paul had this in mind when he called the Pre-Tribulation Rapture our “**blessed hope**”.

Unjustified doubts

Many sincere Christians have difficulty believing in the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. They are unable to see it as anything other than a convenient 'escape'. As fallen sinners we don't deserve such mercy, they say. But they are confused. The PTR, like salvation itself, is a gift. We don't deserve it!

Why did the sons of Noah go into the Ark before a drop of rain fell? The answer is faith! They believed what their father was telling them. Anyone else, with the necessary faith, could have done the same.

We need to understand and accept God's revealed plan for the church. He has shared that plan with us for a reason. He wants us to be ready when His Son comes again – because he will come suddenly, without warning. In the meantime He wants us to bear fruit abundantly, without fear.

Nominal Christians will not be ready. They have no oil in their lamps. Up to now they have gotten along by the light that shone from the lamps of true believers – **“Give us of your oil” (Matthew 25:8)**. But when the trumpet sounds, when Christ calls to his bride and says, in effect, “Come up hither!”, how many of us will eagerly reply, “Yes, Lord, here I am!”?



Yes, the sad truth is that a huge proportion of the professing church will not be ready. These nominal Christians are not waiting for the day of Jesus Christ; they have more important things on their mind. They amble from one end of the year to the other and never once give thought to fact that, when Christ returns and calls to his bride from the air, he won't stay very long. Only those who are ready and waiting – those who are spirit filled – will ascend to meet him.

We live in an age of gross apostasy and appalling lies, of deceitful pastors and mischievous preachers who will gladly lead their flocks into the depths of hell. A great many professing believers think they are saved when they are not. This is why we opened this paper with a brief reference to the indicators in the life of a believer which show that he really IS a believer, someone who has been truly born again in Christ. Chief among these is his desire to be with Christ!

Anyone with that desire will have studied the doctrine of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture with great objectivity and care.



“I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.” (Psalm 102:7)

Why the Enemy hates the Pre-Tribulation Rapture

Why is there so much pressure today – from church leaders and self-proclaimed authorities on Bible prophecy – to refute the truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture? The answer is tied to the imminent creation of a New World Order. Satan wants a great mass of people to reject Christ and receive his ‘son’, the Antichrist. He knows that when the Holy Spirit leaves this earth, He will take the church with Him. He also knows that professing Christians who are not taken up in the Rapture will be subject to the “**strong delusion**” which the Apostle Paul mentions in 2 Thessalonians 2:11. If this is the case (and it is!) then Satan knows that he will fatally enslave millions of souls in the wake of this event.

It should be remembered that it is God Himself who sends the “**strong delusion**”, not Satan. Why will God do this? That “**all might be damned who believed not the truth**” (**2 Thessalonians 2:12**). This is a very unsettling statement since it would seem to imply that all professing Christians who are not taken up in the Rapture will accept the Antichrist

The Holy Spirit must vacate the earth in order that the Wrath of God may fall in all its fury. When He leaves, the church must go with Him. The Rapture and the departure of the Holy Spirit are the same event. We are certain of this connection because of the promise that Christ made to the church: **“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever” (John 14:16).**

The Holy Spirit is the Restrainer spoken of by Paul:

“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now restrains will restrain, until he be taken out of the way.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:7)

[Note: The KJV uses an old English word for the verb “to restrain”]

He alone is capable of impeding the works of darkness on this earth. No organization, institution or group, no matter how spiritual, would be able to do so! A supernatural power can only be restrained by a greater supernatural power. Isaiah says as much: **“...When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.” (Isaiah 59:19)**

Once again, with this verse from Isaiah, we run headlong into one of the many traps set by the Enemy. Most of the modern Bibles make a total mess of this passage. Consider the following:

Isaiah 59:19 –

**“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west,
and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy
shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD
shall lift up a standard against him.”**

[KJV]

NIV

**“From the west, people will fear the name of the LORD, and from
the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory. For he will come like
a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along.”**

ESV

**“So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west,
and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will
come like a rushing stream, which the wind
of the LORD drives.”**

CSB

“They will fear the name of the LORD in the west and his glory
in the east; for he will come like a rushing stream driven
by the wind of the LORD.”

NET

“In the west, people respect the LORD's reputation;
in the east they recognize his splendor.
For he comes like a rushing stream driven on
by wind sent from the LORD.”

NASB

“So they will fear the name of the LORD from the west
And His glory from the rising of the sun,
For He will come like a rushing stream
Which the wind of the LORD drives.”

RSV

“So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west,
and his glory from the rising of the sun;
for he will come like a rushing stream,
which the wind of the LORD drives.”

ASV

“So shall they fear the name of Jehovah from the west,
and his glory from the rising of the sun;
for he will come as a rushing stream,
which the breath of Jehovah driveth.”

HCSB

“They will fear the name of Yahweh in the west and His glory
in the east; for He will come like a rushing stream
driven by the wind of the LORD.”

We find nothing here but confusion and deception. The “enemy”, who shall come in “like a flood”, as stated in the KJV, is completely erased from these corrupt translations. He is even identified with God! As a result the passage makes absolutely no sense.

It is clear from all this that the Ruling Elite – the Children of Wickedness – have made a concerted effort to suppress the truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture in the modern Bible translations. Christians who rely on these translations to reach a sound Scriptural understanding of the Rapture are therefore greatly handicapped. They should set aside these corrupt translations and use the King James or Authorized Version (1611) instead.



The PTR can also be inferred from other doctrines

Interestingly, even if these key verses were not in God's Word, we would STILL know that the doctrine of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is fully supported by Scripture.

The term "the wrath of God" has a precise meaning in God's Word. It only ever applies to the wicked. It cannot fall on repentant sinners. In fact Colossians 3:6 explicitly rules this out: **"...the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:"** We are also told that there is **"no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1)**. Since the Wrath of God is directed ONLY at the wicked, at those who are still under condemnation, then it cannot impinge upon the church in any way, shape or form.

The Book of Revelation describes how the Wrath of God, as a predetermined sequence of judicial events, will fall on the children of disobedience during the seven-year Tribulation. Since these events pertain to the earth as a whole, and not just one or more geographical regions, then they are certain to impact severely on the entire world population. The Tribulation will be universal. Not one soul will escape its onslaught. This means the church cannot be on the earth when it strikes.

To argue otherwise is to claim that the work of Christ on Calvary was incomplete and that his bride must be subjected to the same fiery retribution that the rest of mankind will have to endure. What is more, it would place on the Bridegroom, on Christ himself – the "bridegroom" of Matthew 9:15, Mark 2:19, Luke 5:34, and John 3:29 – the terrible task of judging his Queen (Psalm 45) for a debt that had already been paid. This is simply not tenable.

King Hezekiah

No doubt there are some who believe in the PTR, not because they have confirmed it through a careful examination of Scripture, but because it suits some selfish purpose. They are similar to the Pharisees who were certain they had a place in the Kingdom simply because they were Abraham's sons. Jesus tried to teach them that, if this was their attitude, then in reality they were far from the truth.

We are reminded here of King Hezekiah. This once humble man was filled with pride, possibly because the LORD had added 15 years to his life. He committed an act of great hubris when he showed the Babylonian delegation all that he had in his treasury. This placed him under divine judgment. The prophet Isaiah told him that, because of his presumptuous attitude, all the riches in his treasury would be carried off to Babylon. His sons, too, would be taken and made eunuchs in that pagan land. He added, however, that this calamity would not come about in his lifetime. When he heard this Hezekiah said, **“Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken...for there shall be peace and truth in my days.” (Isaiah 39:8)**

This was a very selfish response. While we might wonder what was running through his mind, it is obvious from what the Bible records that Hezekiah was only concerned about his own welfare. The fact that Judah would be destroyed in the process, that thousands would die, and that his sons would be enslaved and mutilated did not seem to grieve him at all.

Those who believe in the PTR for equally selfish reasons are really no different from Hezekiah.



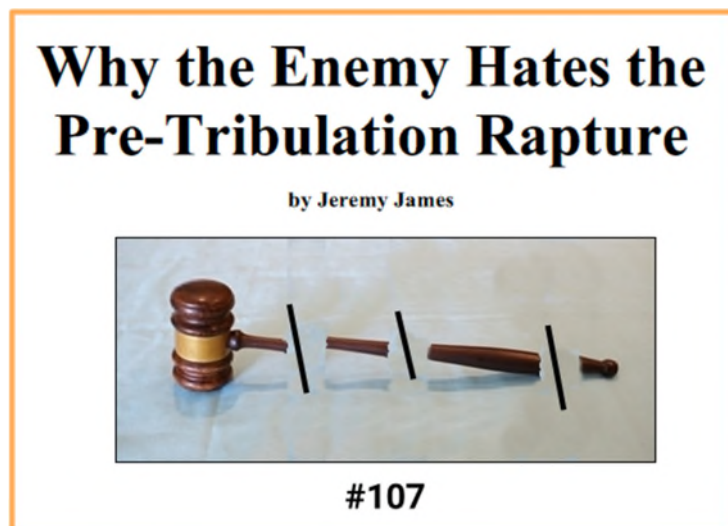
The Parable of the Talents

The parable of the talents is preceded by a verse which shows that it relates directly to the Second Coming of Christ and, by implication, to the Rapture of the church: **“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” (Matthew 25:13)**

At the outset, the three servants seem to be saved because each of them received one or more talents. The first was given five talents and earned five more by productively investing what he had received. The second was given two talents and added another two by wisely using what his master had given him. The last was given only one talent but he did nothing with it! He simply buried it in the ground. (Please bear in mind that a talent of silver is a very substantial sum of money.)

On his return, their master highly commended the first two – **“Well done my good and faithful servant”** – and rewarded them accordingly. However, he was angry with the last, who could at least have put the talent to good use by giving it to the money changers and earning interest. Instead he buried his talent in the ground and showed no respect for his master’s property or any regard for the task entrusted to him. As a result he lost everything! His solitary talent was taken from him and given to the first servant. He was then condemned as an **“unprofitable servant”** and cast into outer darkness.

This parable says a great deal to us today.



CONCLUSION

We can't play games with God's Word. We can neither add to it nor subtract from it. If it teaches a certain doctrine, and men of God have provided good evidence that it does so, then there is an onus on us to examine the matter prayerfully, diligently and respectfully. We have no right to dismiss it unless we can show from Scripture that the doctrine is wrong.

We also need to remember that the Enemy hates the doctrine of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. He does not want the saints to have the **"blessed hope"** or to live in the wonderful certainty of God's grace and mercy. If he is to enslave the world and lure mankind into his deadly trap, then he needs in the End Time an institutional church that no longer believes in the **"blessed hope"**, a church that has wandered so far from God's Word that it no longer sees itself as the Bride of Christ.

The Tribulation saints

Before concluding we would like to mention the spiritual destiny of those souls who come to faith after the seven year Tribulation has begun. In numerical terms they may exceed the number who came to faith during the Church Age.

Despite what some are teaching, these souls will take part in the First Resurrection and will receive immortalized bodies. The life-extending food that the Lord will provide during the Millennium will only be for persons born during the Millennium period, numbering billions, who will not as yet have received immortalized bodies. These people will be direct descendants of those Jewish and Gentile souls, small in number, who survived the Tribulation.

However, the Tribulation saints, if we may call them that, will not be part of the Bride. The Bride comprises only the *ecclesia*, the called-out ones. This is the Church, the body of Christ, which is still growing, albeit slowly. She will reach completion before the seven year Tribulation begins. Not one soul will be added to her body after the Rapture.

The Word of God makes a clear distinction between the saints who comprise the spiritual body we know as the Bride of Christ and the Tribulation saints – greatly beloved by the LORD – who do not. Psalm 45 describes the Bride as follows:

**"...upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.
Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear;
forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;
So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty;
for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him."
(Psalm 45: 9-11)**

Most Bible scholars agree that the “queen” in this passage is actually the church, the Bride of Christ. Even though the church is never revealed in doctrinal terms in the Old Testament, she may be glimpsed in this Psalm. She sits next to the “king” – namely Christ – in “gold of Ophir”, the purest and most radiant form of this element. She is asked to forget all of her former attachments and to worship the King with her whole being.

The beauty of her garment is emphasized:

**“The king’s daughter [or wife] is all glorious within:
her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought
unto the king in raiment of needlework...”
(Psalm 45:13-14)**

The church is the daughter of the LORD and the bride of Christ. Her stunning beauty derives entirely from the redeeming work of Christ on Calvary. Even though her clothing is a ‘covering’ its beauty permeates her entire body.

The Book of Revelation tells us that, while waiting expectantly for the bridegroom, the Bride had been making herself ready:

**“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him:
for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife
hath made herself ready.” (Revelation 19:7)**

We are not told what she did to make herself ready but no doubt it was through her faithful obedience to God and His holy laws, serving as the loyal witness for Christ here on earth, and enduring with patience the persecution which came with that role.

In verses 14 and 15 we find what can only be a reference to the Tribulation saints:

**“...the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought
unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought:
they shall enter into the king’s palace.”
(Psalm 45:14-15)**

We are presented here with a scene where the “virgins”, the Tribulation saints, who are called “companions” of the Bride, are led by the Bride into the palace and the presence of the King. They experience great gladness and rejoicing as they are led in.

From this we can infer that the Bride has immediate access to the Bridegroom, as in a true marriage, while close relations or “companions” of the bride may enter only under her patronage or supervision.

The guests who attend the marriage supper of the Lamb, which will take place here on earth, will be required to have a wedding garment (Matthew 22:11) in order to gain admission. This garment or 'covering' is the righteousness of Christ, which all of the Tribulation saints will possess ("**...for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**" – **Revelation 19:8**).

Seemingly, while the Bride will wear white linen at her marriage ceremony in heaven ("**And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white**" – **Revelation 19:8**), she will be clothed in gold of Ophir at the marriage supper of the Lamb. This would indicate that, after she is married to Christ, a further spiritual change will take place within her.

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July 12, 2019

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